**Focusing on Data: Interviews**

from Smith, Michael, Jeffrey Wilhelm, and James Fredricksen. 2012. *Oh Yeah!: Putting Argument to Work Both in School and Out.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. pp. 62-63

This activity prepares students to do more than just write from written texts. Teach students to supplement published data with other kinds of data, in this case, interviews.

Suggested procedural steps:

* Critique news reporters’ questions (esp. sports reporters)
* Write questions to interview classmates on a topic of interest. Interview each other and determine which questions worked and which didn’t.
* Groups of students work together to draft questions for people outside the class and share results of the interviews. Debrief on both the method and the elicited responses.

For consideration:

* What qualities characterize good questions?
* Are good questions good regardless of the interviewee or do questions need to be tailored for the audience?

Students can mine the interviews by selecting the most compelling pieces of evidence their respondents provided.